

SHORT COMMUNICATION

Pleurophorus caesus (Creutzer) (Col.: Scarabaeidae: Psammobiini) imported into Cambridgeshire.—On 10 March 1997, I found an elongate blackish-brown beetle, 3 mm long and about 1 mm wide, adhering to a stick of celery in my kitchen in Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire (VC31, Hunts.). To the naked eye, it resembled a scolytid or anoibiid, and as my house is infected with a low density of *Ptilinus pectinicornis*, it might have been passed over as a female of that species. Closer inspection revealed that it was an unusually elongate scarabaeid, and it keyed readily in Jessop (1986) and Britton (1956) to *Pleurophorus caesus* (Creutzer). It appears even more elongate and parallel-sided than the illustrations in Harde (1981) or Jessop (1986) suggest; it is well portrayed in Reitter (1909). I am grateful to Darren Mann for confirming the identification.

P. caesus was recorded rarely but widely in Britain last century (Fowler, 1890). Jessop mentions records for Scilly, Cornwall, Bristol and Southport (Merseyside), to which Hyman (1992) adds Glamorgan. The Red Data Book (Shirt, 1987) lists it as a species not recorded since 1900, and the latest record of which I am aware is from the Isles of Scilly in 1890 (Hyman, 1992). The species is apparently common around the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (D. J. Mann, *pers. comm.*). Like most psammobiines, it feeds on decaying vegetation as well as on dry cow dung, and is probably associated with dry, sandy soils.

The celery in question was recently purchased from the local Tesco superstore. It had been imported from Torre Epachepo, Murcia, Spain, transported by refrigerated lorry. Examination of the remainder of the store's Spanish celery stocks on the evening of 10 March failed to produce any further specimens, and subsequent batches of celery were of Israeli origin, and devoid of Coleoptera.

As a casual importation, this record is probably of little consequence except to show that rare or, indeed, extinct native species are occasionally transported by commerce. This process is familiar among larger insects: for example, most recent records of the mole-cricket *Gryllotalpa gryllotalpa* L. are thought to be accidental imports (Marshall & Haes, 1988); but it is seldom reported for more cryptic species. The other purpose of this note is to remark that *P. caesus* looks superficially sufficiently unlike a dung-beetle to be passed over in the field—or the kitchen.—BRIAN C. EVERS HAM, Wildlife Trust for Beds, Cambs & Northants, Lings House, Billing Lings, Northampton NN3 8BE.

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